

Students march on Capital



By Dustin Call

[Glendora's Citrus College Clarion:](#) Thousands of California college students marched upon the Capitol in Sacramento on March 16 to protest against budget cuts to the California Community College system.

The Student Senate for California Community Colleges sponsored the rally, known as the "March in March", the theme of which was "Rescue Education".

There were 16 students and one adviser from Citrus College who travelled overnight by bus to participate in the event.

Among the Citrus students were officers of the Associated Students of Citrus College, one of whom was ASCC President Stefano Saltalamacchia.

"I represent the students of Citrus College, so I think it's imperative to be here and represent them, thanking the legislators and reminding them peacefully that we're still here and that they need to think about us for the future," Saltalamacchia said.

Among others representing Citrus were Stephen Hughes, 20, a forestry major, and Lauren Hjelm, 20, a theology major.

"I want to become a teacher, so my education now is going to help the education of others in the future. So if I don't get an education, how are others going to get an education?" Hjelm said.

Hughes would like to work for the Forest Service, and expressed his concern about the level of funding for the forestry program he participates in, which takes students on trips to forests in other areas for learning purposes.

"You need to travel places," Hughes said. "It's not like math where you can do the same math on a computer from the early '90s as you can on a new high-tech one now, but schools would rather put money toward that."

Citrus students, who shared a bus with students from Rio Hondo College in Whittier, were among the first to arrive at Raley Field in Sacramento, and were asked to lead the one-mile march from there, across Tower Bridge, and down Capitol Mall Lane to the front steps of the state Capitol.

While marching, the crowd chanted and waved signs and banners, demanding funding and awareness for California colleges.

Upon arriving at the Capitol, the crowd continued chanting and danced to the beat of a drum line that had set up at the top of the steps.

A long list of speakers addressed the crowd in front of the Capitol about the need for educational funding. The speakers included student government representatives from all three California college systems, students, and state government officials.

Lt. Gov. John Garamendi, a UC regent and CSU trustee, was one who spoke to the crowd and called for California to invest in the students who he said are the future, and to keep the doors of education open.

"Do not slam the doors on the future. You're the future. Without an education you will not succeed. Unless all of our students are the best educated in the world, California will not succeed," Garamendi said.

He also urged students to make their voices heard back in their own communities.

"Do not stop your protest until every qualified California student has the best education anywhere in this world."

Citrus' own Savannah Dominguez, 22, a nursing major, also addressed the crowd as a Senator-at-large in the Student Senate for California Community Colleges. She is one of only two people in that group who represent career technical education.

Dominguez spoke about how important funding is for career technical education programs, such as nursing and fire-fighting, and how crucial those programs are to the workforce of the country.

"I was standing here for an hour watching the floods of people come in," Dominguez said. "It was an amazing sight because everybody is peaceful, everybody is united, everybody is collected, and everybody is here with an understanding that we are the future. We are the safety net, and it's not being protected, and it needs to be protected."

The newly passed state budget included \$8.4 billion of cuts to kindergarten through community college education.

However, the budget's initiation depends on the passing of six ballot measures, which are part of special statewide election to be held on May 19.

Two of those measures, 1A and 1B, will affect educational funding.